

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) There are no archaeological studies revealing the existence of a Ram Sethu Bridge between India and Sri Lanka.

(b) A NASA satellite picture shows the existence of a stretch of land bridge in the Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka.

(c) Question does not arise.

Maintenance of buildings/temples in Rajasthan

†757. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the absence of maintenance of buildings and temples built in Ninth and Tenth century in Rajasthan, they are turning into ruins;

(b) the heritage of the country is being destroyed by smuggling of this ancient property on large scale in absence of maintenance; and

(c) by when the arrangement will be made to prevent the destruction of the ancient property of the State?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The Centrally protected monuments including buildings/temples of ninth and tenth century AD located in different parts of the State of Rajasthan are in good state of preservation.

(b) and (c) The 3667 notified centrally protected monuments located in different parts of the country under the control of the Archaeological Survey of India, receive adequate attention both in terms of day-do-day maintenance and structural repairs as per archaeological principles. Regular watch and ward staff are provided in these monuments/sites and their strength is augmented in selected monuments by deploying private security guards, state police and para military forces as part of security measure. Legal provisions exist in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological sites and Remains Act, 1958 and rules made thereunder to prevent any misuse or destruction of the ancient monuments under the control of the Archaeological Survey of India.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.